UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/49/713
23 November 1994
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

Forty-ninth session
Agenda item 159

SUPPORT BY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM FOR THE EFFORTS OF GOVERNMENTS TO PROMOTE AND CONSOLIDATE NEW OR RESTORED DEMOCRACIES

Letter dated 22 November 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the Managua Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the Second International Conference of New and Restored Democracies, held at Managua, Nicaragua, from 4 to 6 July 1994.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have this note and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 159.

(Signed) Erich Vílchez ASHER
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX I

[Original: English, French and Spanish]

Managua Declaration adopted at the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held at Managua from 4 to 6 July 1994

We, the ministers and representatives of the new or restored democracies, meeting at the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Managua, Nicaragua, from 4 to 6 July 1994,

Recalling the Manila Declaration of 1988, where the indissoluble link between peace, democracy and development was reaffirmed,

Recognizing that the Second International Conference is a unique opportunity to increase the exchange of experiences which began in Manila on the premise that democratic processes should not develop in isolation and which provides a point of contact and communication that enriches and revitalizes each of those democratic processes,

Recognizing the value of democracy as an integral part of the political, reconciliation and development processes in national societies and of peace and security in the international community within a broader, more comprehensive concept of security,

Acknowledging that democracy and development are the main pillars of international peace and security,

Agreeing that democracy can always be improved with more democracy and not outside of it,

Recognizing the need for a new fellowship of nations based on democracy and mutual respect,

Considering that consolidation of democracy and political stability are the fundamental basis for the development and sustained growth of the new or restored democracies,

Convinced that the future of the new or restored democracies and of peace are linked to the way the international community deals with issues such as the external debt, market protectionism in the developed countries, insufficient availability of concessional funds for development, poverty and the short-term impact on low-income groups of the economic adjustment processes being implemented,

Aware of the urgent need for the international community to comprehend fully the complexity and specificity of the processes of transformation to democracy and towards peace, as well as the need to examine the successes, weaknesses, prospects and stage of development of the new or restored democracies,

Stressing that the stimulus of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, of the private sector, of the United Nations system and of regional and non-governmental organizations is vital for the consolidation of democratic processes and changes in the new or restored democracies,

**United in the common cause for democracy,
we hereby declare:**

1. The growing trend towards democracy and political pluralism guarantees the sovereignty of peoples and the existence of the rule of law, as well as the full exercise, respect for and protection of human rights and social practices aimed at the peaceful search for human development.

2. Democracy is the only system which allows for the free, firm and steadfast union of nations for peace. History has taught us that autocratic, authoritarian, totalitarian or dictatorial governments are censurable and incapable of maintaining their commitment to peace. For this reason, the consolidation of democratic processes is a key element for strengthening peace and international security.

3. Democracy is the best way to achieve human and social development which, on the basis of free and universal electoral processes, requires the daily and constant participation of all citizens in the permanent task of its enhancement and renewal.

4. The barriers of totalitarianism and authoritarianism cannot withstand the challenge of a free exchange of ideas. That is why freedom of the press and freedom of speech and the relevance of political pluralism are the highest expression of the peoples' will and democracy's strength.

5. A solid, democratic and pluralistic system based on the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international pacts and covenants on human rights, is closely linked to the implementation of policies aimed at promoting sustainable development and improve the quality of life of lower income sectors of the population by promoting political and civil liberties and equal opportunity.

6. Development, as one of the fundamental rights of all nations, promotes the full exercise of democracy. There is an urgent need for a commitment to create conditions conducive to the full participation of all citizens in new or restored democratic systems.

7. The economic and social development of peoples who have freed themselves from the yoke of authoritarianism and totalitarianism inevitably goes through the subsequent stage of consolidation of functional democracies. The freely elected representatives of those peoples are duty bound to reconstruct their countries' institutional infrastructures. The consistent, effective and sustained institutional support of the international organizations and older democracies is urgently needed.

8. It is indispensable for societies and their main political figures committed to upholding democracy to analyse critically the transition processes as an expression of their vitality and in the interest of constant renewal which will allow for good governance able to face the challenges of economic and social development.

9. All citizens are responsible for the development of democratic change in order to create a climate of tolerance and mutual understanding in the societies of the new or restored democracies.

10. Good governance - an effective, qualified and transparent civil service and the right and opportunity for persons to challenge and remedy the decisions of the civil service by all legal means- is necessary to maintain stability in the new or restored democracies. Corruption is one of the most serious threats to democracy and must be eliminated by the new or restored democracies using all available legal means. The elimination of corruption in the new or restored democracies will help

ensure the irreversibility of the transition to democracy by maintaining the integrity of the democratic system before the state constituents and avoid the waste of scarce state resources.

11. The new or restored democracies must unavoidably face the problems of demography and the demands of the market economy with social justice. The limited success achieved up to now by the ambitious development enterprise is a warning about the present and future dangers which loom over these countries.

12. Economic reform and structural adjustment programmes that do not take social realities into account could destabilize processes of transition towards democracy and fuel social and political tensions. The World Summit for Social Development should give priority to the analysis of the social impact of structural adjustment programmes and the achievement of growth with equity. We stress the need to encourage economic reforms that ensure a social security net for the most vulnerable and poorest groups in order to eradicate poverty.

13. The frustration of the majorities in the new or restored democracies could spark renewed social disorder, chaos and civil wars instigated by sectors associated with political groups made desperate by previous failures. These are issues of profound importance in the international arena, where globalization of the economy demands objective solutions, shared responsibilities and fair business practices which will allow the new or restored democracies to develop.

14. In order to fulfil the expectations and hopes inspired by the political changes which resulted from the end of the cold war, it is essential to reach agreements about the external debt and, in particular, commercial debt. This is why there is an urgent need for innovative solutions to overcome one of the greatest obstacles for the strengthening of democracies and their institutions, sustainable economic growth and effective governance.

15. We should enjoy the benefits of peace. This entails a real reduction in arms production and sales. Part of the money saved must now be used to support development and strengthen democratic institutions within the framework of the greatest respect for civil and political liberties and for freedom of the press and other media as facilitators of dialogue and understanding.

16. There is a clear need for a concerted effort to fight the production, trafficking and illicit consumption of narcotics and psychotropic substances and to eliminate money laundering, because they are an attack against life and morality, undermine the democratic systems and are incompatible with real and peaceful development for the peoples of the world. We urge the community of nations in the strongest terms to promote cooperation in this area at the national, regional and international levels.

17. We reiterate our most severe condemnation of all terrorist acts, methods, forms and practices wherever they are committed, as they are actions that constitute an assault on human rights, basic freedoms and the preservation of a democratic system.

18. We welcome bilateral and multilateral aid in support of reforms in countries with new or restored democracies, and we are convinced that international aid will continue to play an important role in alleviating the social costs of the transition. In this sense, greater coordination and cooperation are needed among donor countries and institutions on the one hand, and recipient countries on the other, when this is required.

19. The international community must pay closer attention to the obstacles facing the new or restored democracies. If not, the progress made up to now could be reversed. There is therefore an urgent need to broaden the dialogue between the older democracies and the new or restored ones, in order to strengthen the consolidation of democracy, promote development, minimize the social cost of adjustment and, in this way, take into account the specificity, complexity and cohesion of their processes.

20. The role of international, regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the promotion of democratic principles has been and must continue to be fundamental for the strengthening of the new or restored democracies and the reestablishment of democracy where this has been blocked or suppressed by force.

21. We reaffirm our commitment to continue to help strengthen the role of the United Nations in promoting peace and development and, in this context, we give the highest priority to the implementation of the United Nations Secretary-General's Agenda for Peace and the Agenda for Development, when it is adopted, as basic elements for the consolidation of democracy.

22. In accordance with their profoundly pacifist character, the new or restored democracies firmly support disarmament agreements regarding conventional and nuclear weapons.

23. Military structures must be adapted to their proper role in a democratic society within the framework of an institutional order based on the subordination of the said structures to civil authority.

24. We reaffirm the need for political solutions to present conflicts and reiterate that the presence of foreign troops in the territories of new or restored democracies against the will of their peoples and without the consent of their governments is illegal and incompatible with the democratization process taking place in those nations.

25. The utmost respect for sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, the inviolability of borders and compliance with legally valid international treaties is indispensable for development and the consolidation of democracy.

26. The new or restored democracies must make a concerted effort to take advantage of the great opportunity offered by the new World Trade Organization and regional trade associations. The progressive management mechanisms provided by these organizations are a significant way to improve economic and social conditions in the new or restored democracies, as long as equitable trading rules are established.

27. Our commitment to implement the objectives of the present Declaration is firm. For this reason, we reiterate our determination to continue to support and promote consolidation of the universal right to democracy and development with social justice for all of our peoples and nations. For this purpose, we also adopt a Plan of Action, which is an integral part of this Declaration.

Managua, 6 July 1994

ANNEX II

[Original: English, French and Spanish]

Plan of Action adopted at the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held at Managua from 4 to 6 July 1994

Introduction

From confrontation to cooperation

1. The cold war is over. Ideological rivalries and bloc politics no longer prevail in the international arena. Military confrontation and competition for spheres of influence are no longer acceptable in relations among democratic States. The progressive trend towards dialogue has been expressed in greater recourse to peaceful solutions to conflicts. Today, countries tend towards political pluralism and democracy, creating the real possibility of a new system of international relations characterized by cooperation instead of confrontation. The positive political events protagonized by the peoples of different continents, which have resulted in the birth or rebirth of democratic countries, fully confirm the validity and relevance of democratic values.

Structural vulnerability of new or restored democracies

2. Many of the new or restored democracies have profound institutional and organizational weaknesses which must be overcome in order to prevent serious setbacks. The central aspects of this problem, which make many new democracies highly fragile, differ from one country to another, and even between regions, but they often stem from a lack of democratic institutions, mechanisms and experiences or traditions and above all, in many cases, the lack of a truly democratic mentality and attitude, which frequently tends to give way to intolerance and violence instead of understanding and reconciliation. In many of our countries, these shortcomings are related to economic, political, social, cultural, ethnic and religious factors.

3. With obvious differences from one country to another, most of the world's new or restored democracies are undergoing a dual transition: on the one hand, the long and painful transition from repressive and closed societies to openness, tolerance, reconciliation and freedom and, on the other, the transition from planned or highly centralized economies towards the reshaping of the state apparatus and the gradual construction of a social market economy. As if this were not enough, some of the new democracies must also deal with the pressing problems resulting from the aftermath of fratricidal wars and from the abrupt and pronounced reductions of their productive activities and their economies in general.

4. This structural vulnerability of the new or restored democracies is also linked to the existence of an international economic environment which makes the consolidation of democracy extremely difficult and, occasionally, seems to conspire against it.

Isolation and complexity of transition processes in new or restored democracies

5. It is important to stress that the new democratic processes have taken place in considerable isolation, without points of contact or communication among them which would provide the kind of cross-fertilization that would enrich each of those democratic processes, and all of them as a whole, and infuse them with greater vitality.

Objectives

6. Bearing in mind that these realities are closely interrelated and mutually conditioning, we the representatives of the new or restored democracies, in order to strengthen our democratic processes and within the framework of our common commitment to dialogue, peaceful coexistence, economic and social development, respect for political pluralism and for the principles of national sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, self-determination of nations and international law, we hereby adopt the present Plan of Action, with comprises the following objectives:

(a) To foster recognition by the international community of the specificity of the transition processes of the new or restored democracies and, consequently, of the need to adopt cooperation modalities consistent with that specificity;

(b) To promote increased cooperation among the new or restored democracies in order to produce cross-fertilization among their ongoing transition processes;

(c) To implement, within the new or restored democracies, initiatives aimed at developing democratic values and principles, and consolidating mechanisms for the participation of civil society;

(d) To promote a broad national commitment in the interest of strengthening democracy.

I. Promoting acceptance of and respect for democratic principles

7. The enormous task implicit in promoting and consolidating democracy cannot be undertaken in isolation by any Government. The participation of civil society as a whole is indispensable. Thus national authorities and governmental and non-governmental organizations must join forces for the promotion of democratic principles on a national, regional and international scale. Consequently, it is essential to adopt, at the national level, the measures needed to strengthen democratic governability and the rule of law, with special emphasis on:

(a) The consolidation of democratic governability through improved efficiency and openness in public administration and the elimination of corruption;

(b) The strengthening of the principle of the separation of powers;

(c) The strengthening of national legislation and the improvement of the administration of justice;

(d) The reinforcement of the commitment to free and regular elections, by secret ballot, as the mechanism by which representatives are chosen;

(e) The creation or the strengthening of conditions that will ensure the promotion and full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(f) The promotion of the spirit of tolerance, the rejection of chauvinism, ultra-nationalism, xenophobia and any form of discrimination, exclusion and fanaticism;

(g) The establishment, promotion and enhancement of cooperation and consultations between government and civil society to foster the latter's participation in national governments' decision-making processes through permanent institutional mechanisms;

(h) The interest in becoming parties to various international legal instruments relating to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights;

(i) The possibility that regular elections in the new or restored democracies be held with the participation of election-monitoring missions from the international community at the invitation of Governments.

II. Fostering teaching, study, dissemination and a broader understanding of democracy

8. Democracy can be achieved with concrete efforts to ensure political pluralism, freedom of expression, economic consolidation, social development, dialogue, tolerance, reconciliation and full respect for individual and collective freedoms. To this end, one of the most important factors in a democratic State is the development and enhancement of the teaching, study, dissemination and a broader understanding of the different aspects that sustain a democracy. For this purpose it is essential to:

(a) Encourage national educational institutions to include in their curricula subjects related to individual and collective civil, political, economic and social rights, and to cultivate the ethics of democratic and collective values;

(b) Promote the holding of national, regional and international seminars or round tables on democratic processes;

(c) Promote meetings between diverse sectors of the population and parliamentary representatives in order to explain the work of the legislature;

(d) Promote broad dissemination and understanding of national, regional and world efforts aimed at achieving peace, democracy, freedom and development;

(e) Deepen in each country, with the full participation of civil society, the quest for and analysis of appropriate formulas to increase the efficacy of the different stages of democratic transition wherever it takes place;

(f) Organize a broad campaign aimed at creating awareness regarding the question of the transition of the new or restored democracies, the importance of this period and its relevance for international peace and security, including the results of the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies;

(g) Promote, according to the conditions of each country, governability agreements among Governments and political, social and economic forces in order to adopt measures favouring stability and security, indispensable elements for development;

(h) Study the possibility of creating an institute for the consolidation of new or restored democracies which could serve as a centre for data collection, education, analysis and dissemination of democratic experiences, and as a base of support for incipient democratic processes;

(i) Recommend that Governments should harmonize their national legislation with the international human rights entities to which they are parties, increase the populations' knowledge about the law and facilitate the improvement of assistance offered by international organizations in this respect.

(j) Report the results of the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies to the United Nations for official publication as a contribution to the debate on the items "Agenda for development" and "Agenda for Peace.

III. Strengthening of bilateral and multilateral international cooperation to enhance democracy and peace with development

9. Some of the new or restored democracies are currently having to confront not only the appearance of antidemocratic forces, but also the difficult task of dealing with the problems stemming from the transition to democracy and towards a market economy. The hopes raised and the difficult economic conditions of the early stages of this reform are also a challenge to democratization. When resources are scarce and a large part of the population cannot satisfy its basic needs, political development becomes complicated and, consequently, the consolidation of democracy becomes weaker.

10. Convinced that a more democratic world requires increased international cooperation because democracy is a universal task, and bearing in mind that each State is ultimately responsible for its own development, we consider it imperative to promote the following initiatives:

(a) To encourage consultation and coordination among new or restored democracies at international forums and conferences in order to underscore the specificity of the transition and foster the adoption of measures appropriate to and compatible with these new realities.

(b) To establish a cooperation and consultation system among the new or restored democracies to facilitate technical cooperation, including the exchange of experience about specific issues of common interest, as well as mobilization of domestic resources and foreign assistance for peace, the economy, the environment and the consolidation of democracy.

(c) To promote the design and implementation of mechanisms and initiatives at the national level to support a sustained and comprehensive dialogue between the cooperating community and each country to achieve, through appropriate coordination, greater efficiency in cooperation and greater correspondence with national priorities.

(d) To promote effective budgetary planning and management of technical and financial contributions from bilateral and multilateral agencies in order to ensure the transition to a market economy without hurting the most vulnerable social strata.

(e) To strengthen, at the national level, the main foundations of the growth and stability of democratic society through greater macroeconomic flexibility, decreased state control and greater freedom for the private sector to promote business incentives.

(f) To encourage States to devote greater efforts to social development and support all those programmes which can coherently support sustainable human development. The consolidation of democracy requires greater stress on human resources and priority attention to social policy.

(g) To encourage Governments to commit themselves to the fight to eradicate poverty, with the conviction that its elimination is tantamount to defending democracy, because political credibility suffers when the living standard of people is not improved.

(h) To encourage, within the principles of international law, in particular non-intervention and respect for the sovereignty of nations, the different efforts being made in diverse world areas to build democracy and extend the current of new or restored democracies.

(i) To design a comprehensive proposal containing new criteria and modalities for international cooperation with new or restored democracies, with particular stress on the handling of the foreign debt, investment promotion mechanisms, availability of soft credits and transitory schemes in the commercial arena.

(j) Openness and public accountability in the activities of government officials and elected representatives are vital elements in the consolidation of democracy. A transparent definition of functions and responsibilities within different governmental agencies is essential for ensuring effective management of bilateral and multilateral contributions.

IV. The new or restored democracies in the United Nations system and the international financial organizations

11. Democracy in the community of nations is an essential principle in the system of international relations enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. This implies the implementation of democratic principles within the United Nations itself. It entails the assignment of specific responsibilities to each United Nations agency. The new or restored democracies can help maintain a balance between political, economic and social activities in the United Nations so that they may complement each other. To this end it is imperative:

(a) For the new or restored democracies to maintain ongoing consultations and coordination concerning issues of common interest, as well as in the struggle for the eradication of poverty and other forms of exclusion;

(b) To support, in the different agencies and bodies of the United Nations, all initiatives by the new or restored democracies aimed at consolidating the processes of democratization and economic and social development;

(c) To support the principles of peaceful solution of conflicts, both among the new or restored democracies and with other members of the international community;

(d) To undertake, within the framework of the United Nations and other international forums and regional organizations, to support effectively those new or restored democracies that are threatened by antidemocratic forces, such as unconstitutional challenges to legitimately elected governments, destabilization efforts by third party States as well as other threats to democracy.

(e) To work for the achievement of close coordination in the implementation of the Agenda for Peace and the Agenda for Development, when the latter is approved;

(f) To promote, within the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions, greater awareness of the real difficulties and obstacles facing the new or restored democracies,

especially the less developed countries, and the danger that structural adjustment programmes could weaken the consolidation of democratic processes if they do not take into account the social impact and the specific characteristics of transition processes;

(g) To take into account that the conditionality of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank has increased the potential risks of internal instability in the new or restored democracies and, consequently, to promote greater coordination in the social, political and economic decisions and recommendations of the United Nations and in the operation of the international financial institutions;

(h) To request, according to established procedures, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, to undertake a study on the ways in which the United Nations system can support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate the new or restored democracies;

(i) To encourage compliance with United Nations resolutions.

V. Follow-up mechanisms

12. It was agreed to hold the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies within a period of two years in the city of Bucharest, Romania. An Informal Ministerial Meeting will be held yearly during the period of time that will elapse between the two Conferences. This Informal Ministerial Meeting will be held, every year, during the annual session of the United Nations General Assembly.

13. It was decided to empower the President of the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies to set up a pro tempore Secretariat to promote, with support from the Conference Steering Committee and specialized international agencies, the follow-up and implementation of the present Plan of Action until the holding of the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies.

14. It was further decided to request the pro tempore Secretariat to send a letter, with the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, to the Heads of State or Government of the Group of Seven, the Heads of State or Government of the countries members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the President of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the World Bank and the Director of the International Monetary Fund as well as other international organizations interested in democracy, among others.

Managua, 6 July 1994